DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 132 452 CG 006 530

AUTHOR Soares, Anthony T.; Soares, Louise M.
TITLE The MMPI in a Study of the Diffusion of Stereotypic Sex Traits.
PUB DATE [71]
NOTE 8p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Changing Attitudes; College Students; *Emotional Adjustment; Individual Characteristics; *Middle Class; Research Projects; Sex (Characteristics); *Sex Stereotypes; Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory; MMPI

ABSTRACT

Using the MMPI, this study investigates the extent to which sex lines are diffused among college students who tend to represent the middle class. In a comparison of MMPI scores, male college students scored higher than females on all ten clinical scales with seven of these significant, indicating better adjustment in general for women. In regard to the personality traits, the men tended toward less virile characteristics--sensitive, worrisome, insecure, easily embarrassed; women tended toward more masculine characteristics--ambitious, aggressive, confident--indicating overlap of traditional sex characteristics. (Author/MPJ)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED132452

NEERO
1971

The MMPI in a Study of the Diffusion of Stereotypic Sex Traits

Anthony T. Soares
Louise M. Soares

The Problem

The lines defining male and female are becoming increasingly diffused in our society (Ausubel, 1958; Peltier, 1968; Weinstein, 1960; Wolfe, 1959). Men, particularly of the middle class, are not necessarily aggressive, driving, ambitious, or self-assured, as they are so stereotyped. Women are not necessarily submissive, accepting, docile, or conforming, as the female syndrome so dictates. The present study, therefore, in utilizing the MMPI investigated the extent of diffused sex lines among college students who generally come from middle class homes and who will probably return to middle class society as community leaders and models of specific sex traits within the confines of their vocational and home roles. Furthermore, because of the support of past research for better adjustment in women (Bentzen, 1966; Sarason, 1959), it was decided to determine whether this would be borne out in a college population as well.

The study was concerned primarily with testing the following hypotheses:

(1) There is a significant difference between college males and females in their personality traits.

(2) There is a diffusion of stereotyped sex orientations.

(3) Women indicate relatively better adjustment than men.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CG 006 530

Procedures

From a college population, 240 MMPI profiles were randomly selected -- 120 males and 120 females. All subjects were in their junior year of college. The group means of the ten subscales of the MMPI were subjected to a t-test statistical design, and a Chi-square test of independence was applied for the purpose of analyzing the personality traits as indicated for the two groups. In addition, the salient scales were interpreted from the discussion of the scales in the MMPI Manual (Hathaway & McKinley, 1945) and the MMPI Handbook (Dahlstrom & Welch, 1960) and the suggestions given to trained counselors by Drake and Oetting in the MMPI Codebook for Counselors (1959). These last authors studied the profiles of hundreds of normal college students and derived useful hypotheses for explaining results of research. Their procedure is to take the three highest scales for each sex ("high" meaning a T-score equal to, and above, 55), coupled with the one or two lowest ("low" meaning a T-score equal to, or less than, 45). Keeping in mind that high scores tend to indicate poorer adjustment than low scores, an analysis of the data yielded the following results.

Results

Without exception, men had consistently higher mean scores on the ten scales than women (Table 1). Seven of the scales were significantly different, and most of these were at the .01 level. Table 1 also indicates the salient scales for each sex and the percentage of subjects in each group who had a T-score of 55 or above. The highest scores, and the greatest number of responses, occurred on the Masculinity-Femininity scale (MF-5), Hysteria (Hy-3), and Psychopathic Deviate (Pd-4) or Psychasthenia (Pt-7), for the males. The highest scales for the women were Hypomania (Ma-9), Paranoia (Pa-6), and Pd-4. The lowest for both was Social Introversion-Extroversion (SI-0). The resultant coding of these salient scales was as follows:

Males	Females
357-0	469-0
or	
345-0	

Thus, there was support for the three hypotheses. There were significant differences between the sexes on their personality scores, the implied personality traits from the scales, the blurring of masculine traits for men or feminine traits for women, and relatively better adjustment indicated for the women.

In somewhat greater detail, there is implicit in the higher scoring of males on the Mf-5 scale a tendency toward what society might consider feminine interests or aesthetic occupations, or at least less virile activities. Males with a high scoring on this scale seem to be sensitive, easily hurt, idealistic, and perhaps worrisome. With a high scoring on the Hy-3 scale, the male individual may perhaps be characterized as immature, naive, and possibly weak physically, socially friendly and courteous but also suggestible and needing social acceptance.

The picture of the male subjects is even more clearly outlined with the slightly high scoring on Pd-4--with this type of individual tending to keep himself apart from others--and on Pt-7-- somewhat characteristic of an insecure, fearful, compulsive person, perhaps impatient, self-critical, indecisive, tense, and easily embarrassed.

The women indicated a profile which dimensionalizes the subject who has an abundance of energy. She may often be emotionally excitable, temperamental, ambitious, restless, aggressive, deliberate, confident, and critical. Some of these adjectives are not usually associated with the female role. Moreover, according to the results, the women in this study generally indicated better adjustment than the men. The results further demonstrated that, instead of American men and women showing stereotyped dichotomous traits, the characteristics interpreted from the salient scales indicate a tendency toward convergence of traditional sex role prescriptions.

Discussion

The causes of the results are, of course, open to conjecture and interpretation; however, the research results and opinion found in the literature are related to these results. The inadequately defined personality traits of the sexes

in modern society might be a matter of identification (Bandura & Walters, 1963), patterns of expectations (Hays, 1964), social class standards (Richards, 1966), and differential treatment (Baker, 1964). The tendency toward better adjustment of the women may be due, at least in part, to their current role in achieving status as college students without the concomitant social demands placed upon them as upon the men. Or, as Ruth Wylie (1961) might say, they could be "maladjusted deniers." Middle class women are more willing to please than men -- they could be more keenly alert to socially acceptable traits for women and present the expected image rather than the trueone. On the other hand, Clarkson and his associates (1970) discovered that incorporation of certain male-associated personality traits, such as competency, by females tended to indicate better mental health. "Incorporation by women of the male-valued stereotypic items, therefore, implies an enhancement of self-concept along a dimension of mental health, maturity, or self-actualization" (Clarkson, Vogel, Broverman & Broverman, 1970).

Ausubel has located three components of sex role differences (1958). First, the culture sets up a hierarchy of values upon masculinity and feminity and the degree of opportunity available to each sex to positions of prestige and privilege. Second, norms of maleness and femaleness are promulgated. Third, the division of labor between the sexes reflects social and vocational differences. Where any of these break down, there is likely to be fewer clear-cut lines separating the sexes. Obviously, the degree of overlapping and convergence prevalent in our culture bears upon these interrelated aspects of social sex roles. These young adults upon graduation can be expected to assume roles as leaders in their community and in their vocations -- whether tacitly acknowledged or consciously attained. Therefore, if they demonstrate less clear demarcation in personality traits between the sexes, their behavior will also tend to perpetuate, or perhaps augment, sex-trait overlap. More research is needed to determine the effect of the practice of such convergence, as well as its degree of extension.

Summary

In a comparison of MMPI scores, male college students scored higher than females on all ten clinical scales with seven of these significant, indicating better adjustment in general for women. In regard to the personality traits, the men tended toward less virile characteristics -- sensitive, worrisome, insecure, easily embarrassed; whereas the women tended toward more masculine characteristics -- ambitious, aggressive, confident -- indicating overlap of traditional sex characteristics. However, these results could be more indicative of college patterning rather than of society as a whole.

Table 1

Significance of Difference among the Mean T-Scores of Males and Females on the MMPI Subscales

Scales	Males[a]	Females[a]	Differences
1 Hs	54.3	50.4	-3.9**
2 D	52.8	48.4	-4.4**
3 Hy	59.0 (68%)	53.7	-5.3**
4 Pd	58.3 (63%)	55.8 (53%)	-2.5*
5 Mf	61.1 (71%)	53.7	-7.4**
6 Pa	57.0	56.1 (53%)	-.9
7 Pt	58.2 (59%)	53.8	-4.4**
8 Sc	57.6	54.4	-3.2**
9 Ma	57.4	57.1 (59%)	-.3
0 Si	45.5	49.0	-.4

[a] Indicates percentage of subjects obtaining high scores on the subscales.

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$

N=240

References

Ausubel, D.P. Theory and problems of child development. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1958.

Baker, E.F. Technology and woman's work. New York: Columbia University Press, 1964.

Bandura, A., & Walters, R.H. Social Learning and personality development. New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1963.

Bentzen, F. Sex ratios in learning and behavioral disorders. National Elementary Principal, November, 1966, 13-17.

Clarkson, F.E., Vogel, S.R., Broverman, I.K., & Broverman, D.M. Family size and sex-role stereotypes, Science, 1970, 167, 340-392.

Dahlstrom, W.G., & Welch, G.S. An MMPI handbook. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1960.

Drake, L.E., & Oetting, E.R. MMPI codebook for counselors. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959.

Hathaway, D.R., & McKinley, J.C. Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. New York: Psychological Corporation, 1945.

Hays, H.R. The dangerous sex. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1964.

Peltier, G.L. Sex differences in the school. Phi Delta Kappan, 1968, 50, 182-185.

Richards, V. Discontinuities in role expectations of girls. In W.W. Wattenberg (Ed.), Social deviancy among youth. National Society for the Study of Education, 1966, 65, Part 1. Pp. 164-188.

Sarason, N. Psychological problems in mental deficiency, 3rd edition. New York: Harper and Row, 1959.

Weinstein, E.A. An analysis of sex differences in adjustment. Child Development, Dec., 1960, 721-728.

Wolfe, D.M. Power and authority in the family. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), Studies in social power. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Institute for Social Research, 1959. Pp. 99-117.

Wylie, R.C. The self concept. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1961.